



*Office of the United States Attorney  
District of Arizona*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
Monday, September 15, 2008

For Information Contact Public Affairs  
SANDY RAYNOR  
Telephone: (602) 514-7625  
Cell: (602) 525-2681

## **SIX DRUG TRAFFICKERS FROM MEXICO PLEAD GUILTY**

PHOENIX - Six members of a marijuana trafficking conspiracy pleaded guilty in August and September 2008. Miguel Gonzalez-Caballero, 23; Vicente Juarez-Miranda, 38; Luis Lopez-Sajupe, 20; Enoc Montoya-Vega, 20; and Jorge Portela-Perez, 21, all of Mexico, pleaded guilty to conspiring to possess with intent to distribute 50 kilograms or more of marijuana. Francisco Robles-Lopez, 35, of Mexico, pleaded guilty to conspiring to possess with intent to distribute 100 kilograms or more of marijuana. The defendants were all recruited by drug traffickers in Sonoyta, Mexico, and paid between \$1,000 and \$1,800 to help transport marijuana across the Mexican border, through the desert then on to drug traffickers waiting in Arizona.

The six defendants, along with three other co-conspirators, crossed the border in the desert near Sonoyta. Five carried 50 pound bundles of marijuana while Portela-Perez carried food and supplies for the others. After about nine days in the desert, the group ran out of food and water and readily surrendered to U.S. Border Patrol agents who had been tracking and searching for the group. The Border Patrol agents seized approximately 363 pounds of marijuana. The three other members of the group, including one person who acted as a guide and was in contact via cell-phone with the drug traffickers in Mexico, fled into the desert and were not found.

All of the defendants are set to be sentenced by U.S. District Judge Paul G. Rosenblatt between October and December of this year. A conviction for Conspiracy to Possess with Intent to Distribute 50 kilograms or more of Marijuana carries a maximum penalty of 20 years in prison, a \$1,000,000 fine, or both. A conviction for Conspiracy to Possess with Intent to Distribute 100 kilograms or more of Marijuana carries a maximum penalty of 40 years in prison, a \$2,000,000 fine, or both. In determining an actual sentence, Judge Rosenblatt will consult the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines, which provide appropriate sentencing ranges. The judge, however, is not bound by those guidelines in determining a sentence.

The investigation in this case was conducted by U.S. Border Patrol and the Drug Enforcement Administration. The prosecution is being handled by James Morse Jr., Assistant U.S. Attorney, District of Arizona, Phoenix.

CASE NUMBER: CR-08-868  
RELEASE NUMBER: 2008-238(Gonzalez-Caballero et al)

# # #

For more information on the U.S. Attorney's Office, District of Arizona, visit <http://www.usdoj.gov/usao/az/>